



BetterBriefs®

The **BetterIdeas** Project

GLOBAL REPORT

The purpose of this project



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Brands thrive by realising great ideas. However, in these times of attention scarcity and channel fragmentation, getting to them has never mattered more.

Great ideas are no coincidence. They are the result of a trusting relationship and careful assessment. Many hands touch ideas, but not enough nurture them.

This report explores the state of ideas and creative decision making. We hope it ignites conversations amongst your teams and helps you get to better ideas.”

MATT DAVIES & PIETER-PAUL VON WEILER
CO-FOUNDERS, BetterBriefs

FLOOD

RESEARCH FOR HUMANS

Handled with care, survey research can reveal big truths. Critical to this project was to get unvarnished perspectives on the creative process from both marketers and agencies.

By using questions that went beyond surface-level responses, we uncovered both emotional truths and rational insights that illuminate the challenges when evaluating creative ideas.”

VAUGHAN FLOOD
FOUNDER, FLOOD



World Federation
of Advertisers

Creativity is the lifeblood of our industry and a core driver of growth. Sadly there's often a suboptimal creative process that delivers sub-par results. Advertisers and their agencies must invest time, effort and greater faith in fit-for-purpose briefing, evaluation and approval processes that foster collaboration and trust in order to generate bold ideas. Getting this right is the only way to truly harness the power of creativity and enhance the perception of marketing as a key driver of growth.



STEPHAN LOERKE
CEO, WFA

Perspectives coming together



This timely report is something of a wake-up call for our industry, but one which also alerts us to quick wins in efficiency and effectiveness: because good briefs and good briefings achieve both. The IPA is delighted to endorse its publication as stimulus for new, improved processes and better training.

Good briefs, the data suggests, are universally understood to be business-critical but somehow don't pull through as a reference point for evaluation. They serve as starting guns for creative development but then seem to be disregarded as scorecards, however loosely that scorecard might or should be held. In their absence at the back end, we overestimate our ability to evaluate ideas while acknowledging our lack of training in this regard.

The result – no less than five rounds of re-work, according to this dataset – is in nobody's interest. It's inefficient, obviously, but militates against effectiveness also. As the great DDB/Avis creative contract taught us: conviction, not compromise must carry the day. This work lights the touchpaper for a re-commitment to shared goals, to briefs as lodestars, to less subjective and – above all – less plural feedback. After all: search all the parks in all the cities, and you'll find no statues of committees.



LAURENCE GREEN
Director of Effectiveness, IPA



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1034

respondents from

54

countries

USA
237

UK
261

409

from **marketing
organisations**

53%

have 15+ years
experience

329

from **creative
agencies**

69%

have 15+ years
experience

180

from **in-house
departments**

718

mainly
focused on

B2C

ideas

309

mainly
focused on

B2B

ideas

AUS
274



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LEGEND



Marketer: anyone working for a brand and involved in the review or approval of creative ideas.



Creative agency: anyone working in account management, strategy, creative or management at an external creative agency.



The original question or statement as it appeared in our questionnaire.



**Strong ideas are
important but
hard to realise**



Creative ideas are important

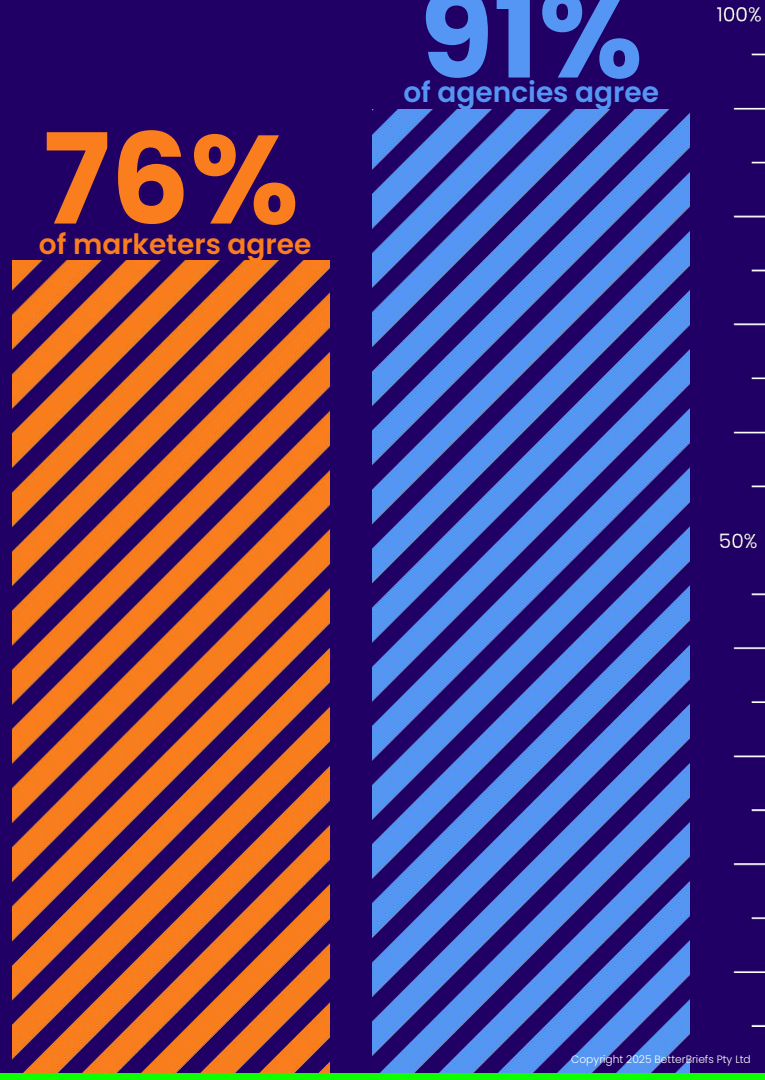
STATEMENT

'Strong creative ideas are essential to the overall success of an organisation's marketing effort.'



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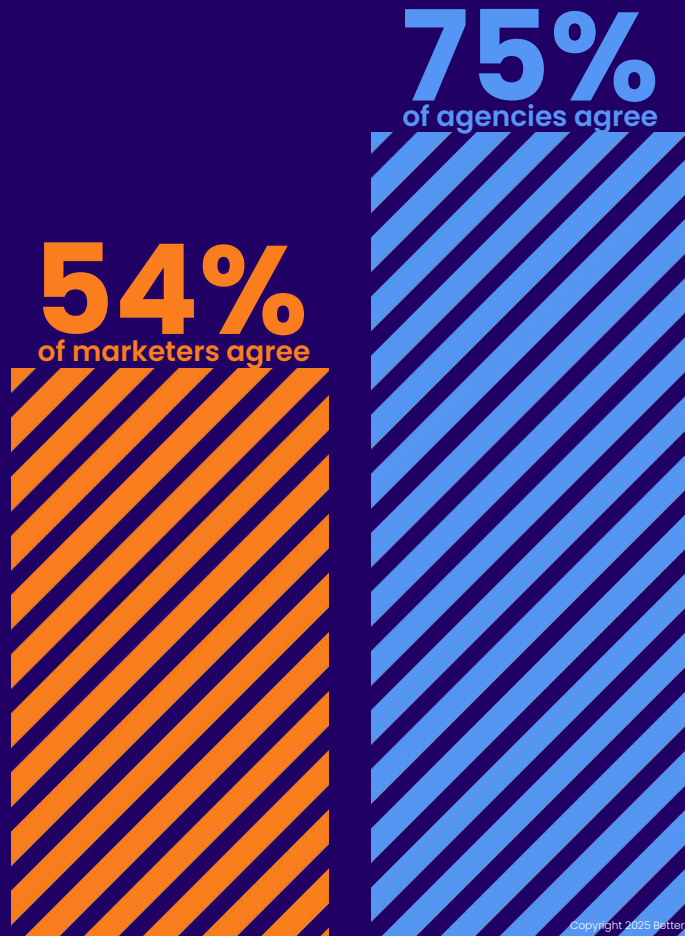


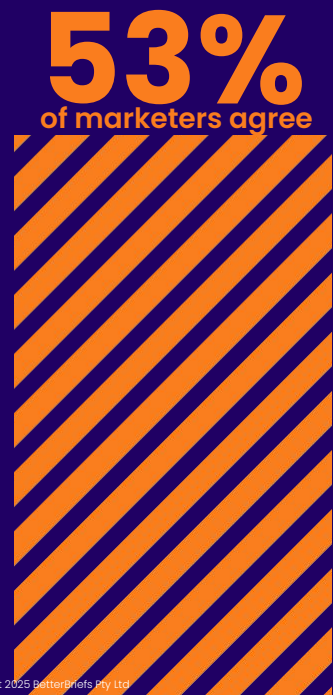
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Most creative work doesn't cut through the clutter

STATEMENT

'Most creative work
doesn't stand out.'





The quality of creative work is not progressing

STATEMENT

'I feel that the quality of the creative work is getting better over time.'



A tricky but important responsibility

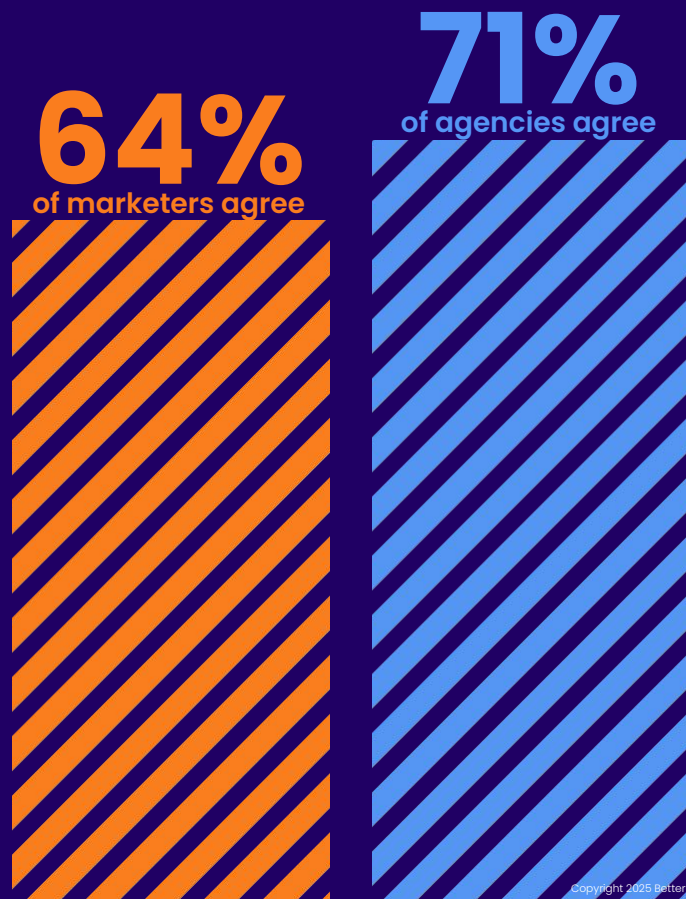
STATEMENT

'Evaluating ideas is hard.'



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A tricky but important responsibility

Evaluating ideas is where our ability to blend logic and magic is most tested. We're lucky to work in an era where we know so much about how ideas work but that can work against us. Ideas that could be legendary get logic'ed out.

“ JO ARDEN
CSO, AMV BBDO

Creativity is a confidence game. It requires utter belief to bring creativity into existence, strength of will to take others on the journey and total commitment to buy it.

“ MELANIE ARROW
CSO, McCANN

Evaluating ideas is hard, they are such intangible and delicate things, especially when they first see the light of day. It's important that we recognise how difficult it is, and that this sense is shared openly between clients and agencies.

“ RICHARD HUNTINGTON
CSO, SAATCHI & SAATCHI



What's holding better ideas back?



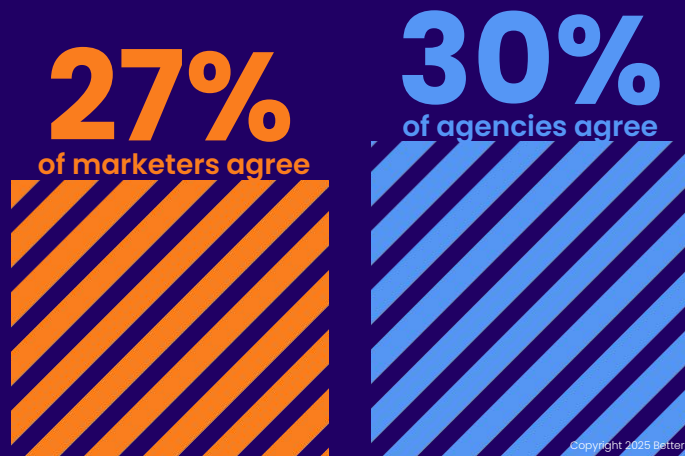
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The industry lacks training

STATEMENT

'I'm well-trained in
how to evaluate ideas.'



Feedback provided is often unclear & inadequate



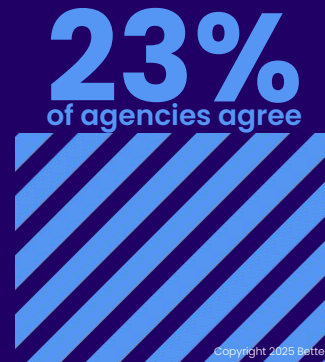
STATEMENT

'We/my clients provide clear
and constructive feedback.'

Current approval processes are **not functioning well**

STATEMENT

'The client approval process works well.'



Current approval processes are **not functioning well**

STATEMENT

'How would you describe the current approvals process when it comes to getting ideas signed off?'

Top mentions:

- #1 **Inconsistent**
- #2 **Slow**
- #3 **Subjective**
- #4 **Painful**



Current approval processes are **not functioning well**



It can be a challenge indeed to make the approval process disciplined and not led by each individual's subjectivity, at all levels of management! Being disciplined starts with linking the creative work assessment and approval back to the initial brief, which suppose this brief has been signed off by all stakeholders involved later in the approval process. We should avoid the approval/non-approval to be led by someone who has not been exposed to the initial brief and to be based on his/her personal judgement.



PASCAL PERROCHON
Head of Creative Impact, PERNOD RICARD

Creativity dies in committees. In the agency and with the client, we need to accept that, after views have been heard, we need a clear decision.

Trying to accommodate the peccadillos and preferences of everyone in the room slows things down and makes for worse work.



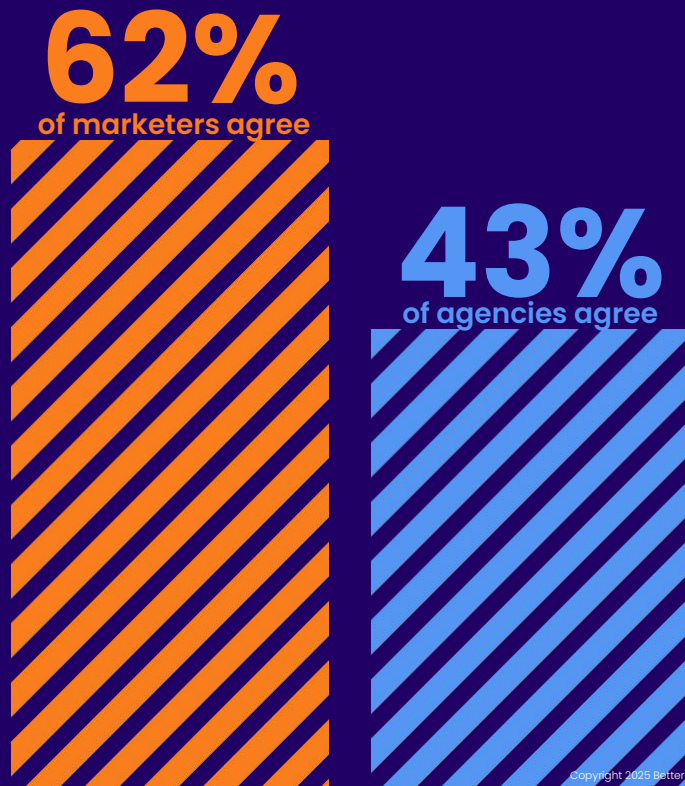
JO ARDEN
CSO, AMV BBDO



The right decision-makers aren't always involved

STATEMENT

'The right people sign-off on creative ideas.'



Briefs are **not being used** when ideas get evaluated

STATEMENT

'In our organisation, briefs are always used when evaluating ideas.'



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Briefs are **not being used** when ideas get evaluated



The brief is **essential**. Of course there's always an idea which is "off brief" but even that notion suggests the brief is an active tool in the evaluation of the idea.

It's essential to go back to what we all signed up to and build from it, not start with a blank page at each stage: that's a quick way to burn creatives and jeopardise brands.



JO ARDEN
CSO, AMV BBDO



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Criteria to evaluate ideas against are **often missing**

STATEMENT

'Ideas are always evaluated against clearly defined criteria in my organisation.'

10%
of all respondents agree



The impact of poor assessment practices



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Personal opinion is shaping feedback and decisions

STATEMENT

'Personal opinion has a big influence on decision-making.'



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Personal opinion is shaping feedback and decisions

Personal judgement, and immediate personal emotions should be taken into account, especially when the Brand has the ambition to create consumer engagement on an emotional standpoint. However, personal emotions should be balanced with criteria that were part of the initial brief, and be mitigated by the consumer target estimated reaction, not based only on our personal one.

FEEDBACK



PASCAL PERROCHON
Head of Creative Impact, PERNOD RICARD



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The rework rate is high and time consuming

STATEMENT

'How many rounds of creative development does it typically take to get to a signed-off idea?'

1

2

3

4

5

rounds



The rework rate is high and time consuming

STATEMENT

'How many rounds of creative development does it typically take to get to a signed-off idea?'



marketers



creative
agencies



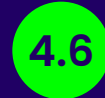
in-house
departments



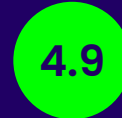
B2C



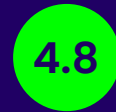
B2B



AUS



UK



USA

3 rounds – IPA research, 2007 in the UK



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The rework rate is high and time consuming



When agencies and brands collaborate to align on briefs, it not only ensures Creatives have clear goals—it fuels their inspiration with meaningful insights, leading to more impactful work and fewer rounds of changes.

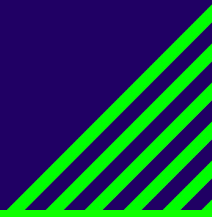


SHAY FU SCOLERI
Global Agency Relations, MASTERCARD

Creative agencies have got worse at standing up for the work they make and the time it takes. We're seeing 8 rounds of creative work where once we saw three. Better briefs, sticking to a signed off strategy, setting out what good looks like from the start would all help. It needs to be solved: where previously the extra work was absorbed by unboundaried employees, now it is starting to cost hard cash – and no creative agency can sustain that in the long term.



JO ARDEN
CSO, AMV BBDO



There's a **lack of pride** in the creative work that's made

Marketers
are proud of

36%

of the work they have
been involved with
across their careers.

Creative agencies
are proud of

26%

of the work they have
been involved with
across their careers.

In-house teams
are proud of

32%

of the work they have
been involved with
across their careers.



There's a **lack of pride** in the creative work that's made

There are cases where the proudest work was built through a briefing process similar to 'counselling'. This counselling style helps us to dig deeper together and unite 2 teams under one mission, hence it works better than one-way brief from client to agency, resulting in work that we are both proud of.



MIKIMASA HAMAMATSU
Division General Manager, Global Marketing
NISSAN MOTOR CORPORATION

I'm shocked by these results.

To the marketers I say, what on earth were you doing? You are not a bystander in your own career. You have the power, the budgets, and eager, talented agencies working for you to make brilliant work. This is on you.

To the agencies I say, have you no pride and self-respect? What company in any other sector would have a lack of pride in ¾ of their products? Care about your product or get out of the industry.



RICHARD HUNTINGTON
CSO, SAATCHI & SAATCHI



Agencies **lack trust** in marketers

70%

of creative agencies don't trust
the creative judgement of the
marketers they work with.



Agencies **lack trust** in marketers

Trust between creative agencies and marketers is built on the relationship, which needs to be a mutual give-and-take and grow over time. Agencies need to understand that it is not only the judgement of the marketer that is important, but that for us it is important to check ideas with our consumers within a short test to see if the insight and idea resonates.



DAGMAR JANKE
Global Director NIVEA Communication Operations &
Agency Management, D&I Lead for NIVEA, BEIERSDORF

I'm profoundly saddened by this finding. What we all do is incredibly hard and depends on partnership. It also depends on understanding each other's roles. Creative agencies have to find exceptional ideas and that's difficult, but clients have the unenviable role of deciding which one to pursue and to sell it internally. I don't think this is well understood enough in creative agencies.



RICHARD HUNTINGTON
CSO, SAATCHI & SAATCHI



How to get to better ideas



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Empower agencies to do their best work

STATEMENT

'We inspire the agency to do their best work.'

/

'Our clients inspire us to do our best work.'



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69%
of marketers agree

29%
of agencies agree



Marketers who inspire
their agency to do their
best work are three
times **more likely to
feel proud of the work
they're involved with.**



Input determines output;
refer back to the brief
when evaluating an idea

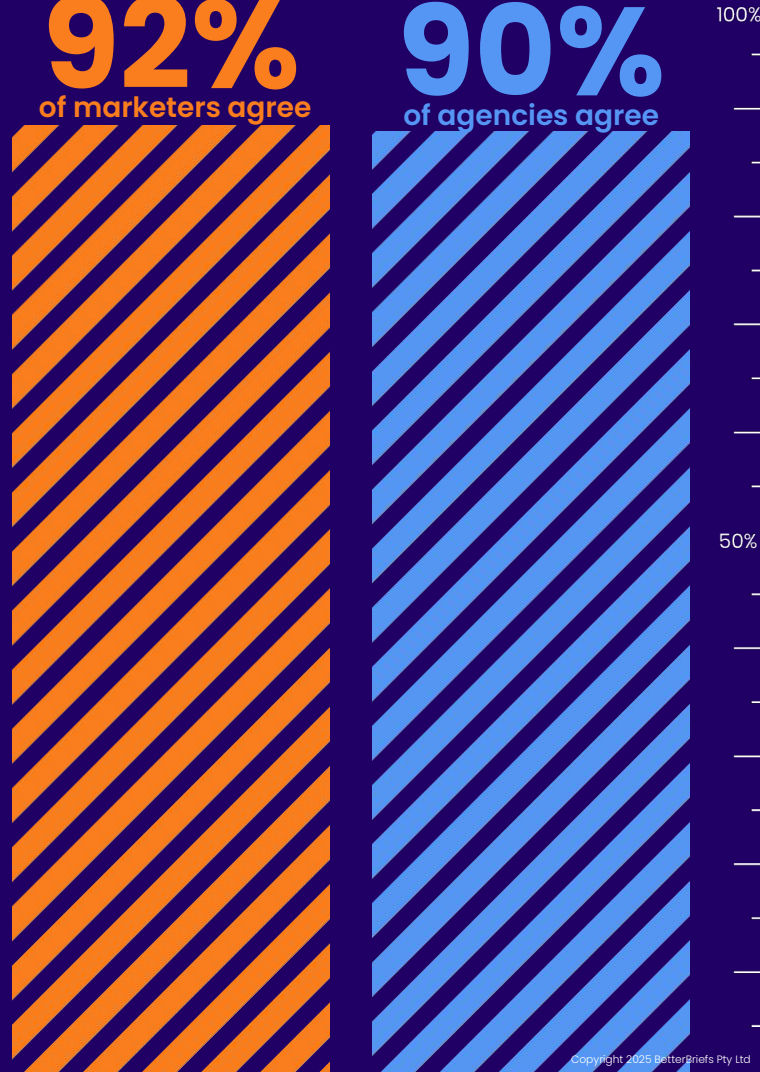
STATEMENT

'Briefs are a key tool for evaluating ideas.'



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Top ranked **criteria** used to evaluate ideas

	marketers	creative agencies	in-house teams
#1 'Engaging for the target audience'	51%	59%	50%
#2 'On brief'	46%	61%	46%
#3 'Will earn people's attention'	35%	43%	32%
#4 'Is well-branded'	25%	19%	23%



About



BetterBriefs.

BetterBriefs is a training and advisory business that helps marketers write better briefs and realise more effective ideas.

We work with ambitious brands to get to better creative work in less time.

betterbriefs.com

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RESEARCH FOR HUMANS

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